



Gender Equity Unit
University of the Western Cape

WOMEN, ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

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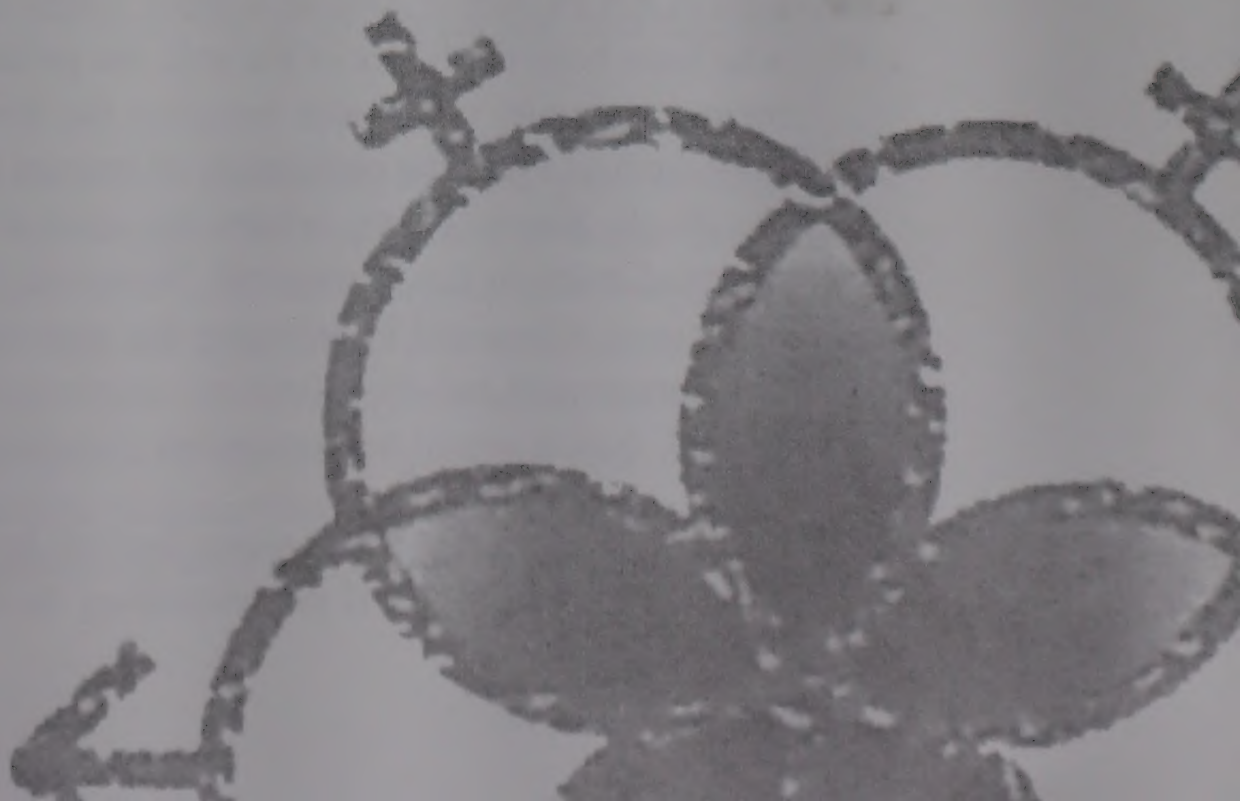
SUMMARY

In this paper I try to trace the history and highlights of women's interest in economic issues, illustrate some of women's contributions to the theory and practice of economics and end with some of the ideas that women can put forward in the context of the new buzz word globalisation

The first half of the paper undertakes a historical narration of emphasis within the women's movement, recording the early preoccupation with the economic roles of women, the attempts to put these on record, and to show gender stereotyping of roles, and disparities in wages, absorption into the labour force etc. In this context the paper details efforts to measure time use, and women's work, It explains the growth of the trend in recognizing and recording household work, home based work as legitimate work, and the effort to organize such workers.

The body- mind dichotomy that pervades the gender discourse is looked into in order to show that with the shift from viewing women, from the viewpoint of the body: the physical self, and its needs, to the mind, the intellectual is necessary for advocacy by women to be moved out of traditional hierarchies.

From there it goes on to talk of women's responses to economic changes, women's analysis and how women mobilize themselves to form counter forces to globalisation. The paper has running through it a single persistent connecting thread, that is, concern for the poor, among who women are the poorest – a concern for what Gandhi called the last man or the last woman, the most deprived and the most poor.



WOMEN, ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT

I am glad that the University of Western Cape has thought of this title. Rarely do women have an opportunity to engage with economics, the tendency is to engage with the social sector and with politics. Let me add a rider to say, this does not mean to say that economics is more important than social development or politics. In fact the argument in this paper would be a critique of economics because it does not take note of politics and social development.

Having said that, I propose to engage with economics and to evoke our collective thinking so that we might emerge not only with some points for further research, but certainly for collective advocacy.

II. A history of the evolution of emphasis within the women's movement

In the early period of what can be called the international women's movement or the women's movement worldwide, which normally we postulate as starting in 1975 with the first international conference convened by the UN in Mexico, the stress was on the economic roles of women - the importance for identifying these and then strengthening them in all areas:

- Statistics, that is, recognition of the contribution of women to the economy which normally is invisible and uncounted.
- Showing the differentiation derived from gender in the roles assigned, what is called gender stereotyping of roles.
- The special aspects of women's productive roles since they converge into production and reproduction.
- The difference in the pattern in which women are absorbed into the labour force, as well as
- The difference in wage and the role of women in the worker movements and where that needs to be strengthened. (see Devaki Jain, 'Pattern of Women's Work - Policy Implications', National Conference of Women Studies, 1983, Bombay).

In Mexico (UN First International Conference on Women, see Devaki Jain, 'Minds not Bodies' British Council, 1996), one of the major panels was on women and economics convened by Dr. Irene Tinker with the main speaker being Ester Boserup. I give these names because most of you will recognize the revolutionary contribution of Ester Boserup to the understanding of women's role in development, in the continent of Africa. While African women might themselves have known that it is women who have been the tillers of the soil, the producers of food in Africa, for the development community which also becomes the donor community, including UN organisations such as FAO, the perception of women was derived from the roles of women in the Anglo Saxon North, where the men were farmers and women were usually assigned roles in the homestead. However, Ester pointed out that women were the farmers in Africa and by bringing the type of legislation's and reforms with the goal of improvement and development, where women were pushed out of the entitlement to land, Africa would be hurting her own food security.

At that panel, I presented a paper derived from my work in statistics, which showed that amongst the poor, if the measuring devices used by the international statistical

system to define the worker were changed, it would be found that there were larger number of women in the formal labour force than there were men, especially as we go down the income categories. (Jain, 'Time Use, Patterns of Female Work'). The way in which the international and national surveys were conducted, the method of surveying, for example the questions posed to respondents, were such that they derived answers, which automatically dropped women and women's work from the counting. Let me give you an example.

The question is : what has been your main or most regular activity in the last week or the last year? The list has the usual economic activities, almost 93 in number (UN statistical system). The woman perceives her main activity as *domestic* activity, even though she may have milked the cows, cut the grass, weeded the fields and threshed grain. The answer "domestic activity" immediately excludes her from the list of those engaged in what is called "gainful activities", which is the way workers are enumerated.

In our attempt in India, to modify this measuring or counting device, those who are working on engendering statistics suggested that instead of asking what is your main activity, we divide the activities into three categories – household production, home based personal activities and other productive activities and ask them what did you do in terms of half days rather than full days over a week against these three categories. Household production would be the kind of production activities that women do within the house or in the homestead domain and we gave a sub list. We then proved that if this were done, women would answer differently and not are dropped from the counted economic force but be included, as they would perceive their work as gainful.

Another important highlight at the Mexico conference was the attention paid to the importance of organising women into forms of associations around their work identification. It is here that the Self Employed Women's Association of India began their advocacy for recognising that the majority of women are workers even if unidentified by the formal system. They cannot survive without making an economic contribution since amongst the poor, women are the poorest and bring home some food by the end of the day is critical for survival. Thus we arrived at the slogan 'all poor women are workers'. The argument here was that by organising them around occupations, such as vegetable vendor, load carrier, fish worker, rag picker, their occupational identity would increase, their bargaining power with the contractors and the money lenders would increase, their occupation would get identified in the trades list, and thereby qualify for minimum wage laws.

Thus began the movement for informal unions built around the trades of poor women. We know today how the SEWA union has flagged the importance of home based workers and even mobilized national and international advocacy so effectively, that ILO has now a convention on home based workers. This means that home based work has been recognised as 'work' and therefore home based workers who are workers in the informal economy and often self employed, can access the gamut of legal entitlements and services provided by of the various nations who have signed their international labour conventions. This is a revolutionary step, as this deals with the majori-

ty of women workers worldwide. This is also an example of local experience impacting globally relevant laws. I call this **'think locally and act globally'**, thus reversing the normal saying **'think globally and act locally'**.

By reversing this hierarchy what I am suggesting is that the poor, the women, the people at the grassroots are not only able to think, but are in fact thinkers. It is they who have an understanding, which can be articulated. It is the people at the top who need to listen and need to be educated.

This dichotomy of "mind body" is an aspect, which also pervades the discourse on gender. Women are often identified with the physical because of their reproductive strength as well as their role within the home. Much of policy is related to women's bodies, the physiological difference is emphasized around the body. However, we need to upturn that hierarchy and not only consider, but put forward the proposition of women as minds – as capable of active agency (to use Amartya Sen's language) looking more at women's contribution to thought, to ideas, to the deconstruction of existing theories of knowledge including theology and its reconstruction from the experience of women. Thus in a paper that I presented in Beijing 1995, (Bradford Morse Award UNDP), I argued that women were minds, not bodies (Ref: Devaki Jain, 'Minds not Bodies' in *Minds, Bodies and Exemplars*, British Council Division, New Delhi) "Women are seen as bodies and especially women in poverty seen as needing inputs into their bodies: food, healthcare, fertility interventions shelter and security from bodily violence. A reality. Yet their struggles: domestic, local or global are expressions of mind. They reflect woman's intellectual and cultural capability, her individuality, creativity, her sense of responsibility."

Thus one can argue that in the period 1975 to perhaps 1985, the emphasis from the women's movement, academics and the activists was to draw attention to women's economic contribution to the nation. We were shifting language from 'integrating women into development' – as was the message of the UN – to women are 'already integrated into development', they were being recognized as major contributors. What is required is recognition of and justice accorded to these phenomena.

This was the main message of Dawn – Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, to the world conference in Nairobi in 1985, a platform document. The network was birthed at a brainstorming session which I convened in August 1984 to analyse the message given by the UN at that time, and to develop a framework which is more relevant to the understanding of the location of poor women in the continents of the South. (Devaki Jain, *Development as if women mattered*, OECD / DAC, Paris 1983) The UN framework based on the idea to "Integrate women into development" and consequently to use various indicators which revealed the inequality between men and women, and put forward proposals for building equality. DAWN in its consideration of this approach, felt that this did not offer a leverage for transformation as it was too flat – it did not contextually locate the women in their economic landscape. Thus DAWN then developed its framework where the regions were characterized for their particular characteristics, - AFRICA – food; LATIN AMERICA – debt; then figures ASIA – unemployment; PACIFIC – militarism and so on. On this was built the analysis for recasting development.

However, as the decades have moved, While the economic aspect of women's contribution has begun to be identified decades of demands to the system have not delivered. It is now realized that only through taking control of the structures of power that gender injustice can be reversed. The emphasis seems to be moving beyond economics to the politics and the social. Thus we see at Beijing 95 the major collective voice of the 35,000 women gathered there speaking of the importance of bringing women into the power structure.

III. Addressing Mainstream Economics:

I have taken a little time to relate some of the historical background as it leads into my next section, which is to share with you some of the ideas that have been emerging which we need to discuss and strengthen. This relates to theoretical propositions in economics. There is now an international association of feminist economists, who are teasing out the errors in mainstream economics. Their first critique was of the notion of the household as the ultimate unit, looking at it as a homogeneous collectivity and as the base for both statistical collection and for adjusting economic change. However, feminists have broken through the household and shown that there is deep inequality between men and women, between old and young within the household. Second that roles are highly diverse and distanced within the household. A man may be a farmer and woman the weaver or the reverse. Three, that children are also workers and they have another occupational classification. Four, that distribution within the household is unequal and it is not clear who is the main bread winner and so on. (See Jain and Bannerjee, *Tyranny of the Household*, Vikas Publications). I have brought some papers, which speak of this issue called the household trap, called patterns of female work etc.)

This breaking open of the household then led to some theories on household economics. The convention was to argue that households were a microcosm of the global economy with family members working towards maximising their outcome and dividing their roles within the household for this maximisation. This was challenged by feminists and other theories of household economics developed (Nancy Folbre et al, International Federation of Feminists Economic Association -IFEA). The theoretical propositions that have emerged are the theories such as seasonal variations in employment, for example peaks in the absorption of labour in agricultural harvesting seasons and peaks and slumps in the absorption of labour into the agricultural sector are different between men and women. In Asia for example men will plough, women will sow and harvest. The season where male labour is required is different from the season when female labor is absorbed. Since the analyses usually imagine that men and women were the same, this was not understood in the planning of employment policies or offers employment.

(See Devaki Jain: *Economic and Political Weekly*, Lessons from Practice to Theory from Women's Studies, Where I have listed various propositions in economic theory, which have been disturbed by the uncovering of reality, which was produced by the women's studies network in India).

I suggest that we must rethink theory and put forward new propositions and new ideas for promoting growth with equity.

For example I would propose that poverty eradication is a dynamic and purposeful engine of growth, so that it becomes possible to make currency out of a new theoretical proposition I have called "Bubbling Up Theory of Growth". Which counter, the old 'Trickling Down Theory of Growth'. The Bubbling up theory argues that the process of removal of poverty can itself be an engine of growth, that the incomes and capabilities of those who are currently poor has the potential to generate demand which in turn will engineer production, but of goods that are immediately needed by the poor which are currently pattern of peripheral in the production. The oiling, then, of this engine will bubble up and fire the economy, in a much more broad based manner. Unlike export led growth it will not skew production and trade into the elite trap, which is accommodating disparities and creating discontent... (Jain: 1998)

The inspiration for this theory comes from Mahatma Gandhi, which is also reflected in the quote from his ideas that Mahbub uses in his first South Asian HDR.

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to self-reliance for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.

Another is transforming the language and thereby the framework for development cooperation. Amartya Sen in Chapter 1 of the HDR 2000 emphasises that the rights language brings in the aspect of claiming development. Thus the poor can claim development through the various institutional, political, legal instruments. In another lecture given in Tokyo, he has provided an argument to drop what he calls the need based approach, replacing it with the rights based approach. He pictures it by talking of people as patients who have needs and ends with a quotation about slaves.

"We need a vision of mankind not as patients whose interests have to be looked after, but as agents who can do effective things – both individually and jointly."

"There must be greater understanding of the environmental precariousness arising from the consumption habits around the world, especially of the affluent (as the recent report of the Royal Society, Towards Sustainable Consumption : A European Perspective, has illuminatingly brought out). These are important issues to be discussed, but we also have to go beyond the role of human beings specifically as "consumers" or as "people with needs", and consider, more broadly, their general role as agents of change who can – given the opportunity – think, assess, evaluate, resolve, inspire, agitate, and through these means, reshape the world."

"For example, people who are used to living in a persistent state of undernourishment, illiteracy and lack of basic health care may come to think of nourishment or school education or medical attention as a luxury, rather than as a "need", so that even if we go by their own self-perception of needs, we may take an unjustly limited view of their deprivation. In contrast, the self-diagnosis of needs in a state of freedom to achieve their fulfillment has a much more plausible social status than a diagnosis that tends to be muffled and muted by the experience of tenacious deprivation. Downward adaptation of the conception of needs can happen in many different fields, varying

from the unquestioning acceptance of authoritarian interference to fatalistic tolerance of foul air or polluted water. We have reason enough to question that contentment if it is generated by hopelessness and resignation, in the absence of the courage and freedom to consider alternatives. As William Cowper has put it, "Freedom has a thousand charms to show. That slaves, however contended, never know".

In another place, I have suggested that words like globalisation, governance, and gender need to be deconstructed and reclaimed with appropriate meanings by developing countries. Thus I would say transforming the language is one way of transforming the way of thinking on development and development cooperation (Jain, New York, 2000).

Coming to the contemporary which is the response to what is called Globalisation and what an organisation called the Focus on the Global South located in Bangkok but with worldwide networks is now calling LPG (Liberalization, Privatization, Globalisation). In responses to Globalisation, the women's movement and those who are working in women and economics are not only content with rethinking, with protesting against Globalisation because of the universally understood class and gender segmented impact that it has but in finding a space for the mobilization of the women's movement to develop a counter revolutionary force.

My basic argument would be that we need to shift our attention from the broad term globalisation to the term regulation. I suggest that the current preoccupation, whether it is in the forums of the finance ministries of nations, or the international economic organisations, in which I include the Bretton Woods Institutions (BWI's) and WTO the issue is regulation, a paradigm or quantum shift from the message deregulate. The questions of disputation are of what, how much, where, under whose control? The word regulation, the very anti thesis of liberalisation and free trade, has found its way back into legitimacy, due to the experience of the last 5-10 years of the global mantra, the formula that was being applied across the board, as the road to prosperity.

I would give examples of this rethink, this revival of interest in the modes of regulation, in the paper. Most of the details and references are in my Nita Barrow Memorial Lecture given at the University of West Indies, in Barbados in November 1999.

It is here, in the area of regulation that woman, feminists can develop and put forward new ideas, whether of theoretical economics, or on institutions, including political institutions, -how they are assembled, under what rules and procedures they function, on international agencies including the WTO. I suggest that it is on this theme that women can design and plan their public action events. I suggest that there is a strategic advantage in moving away from the word, the term globalisation, a term that has lost its boundaries and therefore is too amorphous, to the term regulation as that is where the cookie crumbles.

But I also suggest that the proposals have to be tethered in an ideological base, in a unity of purpose and philosophy, or analysis for the effort to be meaningful, and successful. This I suggest is feminism - a feminism which is a political ideology, derived from women's experience of life, endorsing that experience as different from men's

experience and seeing that difference as valuable; a feminism which stands for social justice, which of course would mean eradication of poverty and related deprivations and inequality, - which in my opinion is a part of poverty.

I would support my case from three sources:

One, the global discourse on Globalisation as contained in what are called mainstream documents – World Development Reports of the World Bank, Articles and lectures by Stiglitz and Bhagwathi, - leaders of opinion on World Trade matters - UNDP HDR's, a meeting of economists held at Geneva, - at the UNCTAD in February 1999 on drafting a framework for economic development of the least developed countries of the world, - in the context of globalisation, and issues raised at the WTO Seattle Summit. Details on this review and my inferences from it, are contained in the Nita Barrow lecture and so I may not have the time to go over it.

Two, the Experience of the Indian economy in relation to globalisation.

Three, the responses of women's collectivities at the ground and pre-Beijing +5 level to these concerns.

In a review I made of the attitude, the ideas and information on globalisation for the Nita Barrow lecture, a striking aspect of the literature was that everyone in the system, be it the World Bank, an academic economist, or the NGOs; - everyone is nuancing globalization. By nuancing I mean drawing out subtleties or the details. Thus in the last five years the discourse has shifted from the 'Mantra' stage (that is sweeping statements about states and markets, and liberalization and reform). The voices have now shifted to qualification, to a concern with reforming the reform programme.

This transformation from rigidity to humility is of course due to the actual lived experience, but also due to new interventions in the discourse such as those from UNDP's Human Development Reports. This transformation also includes the effectiveness of groundswell movements such as the NGO movement, the inclusion of women in larger numbers than before in the various consultative and decision making processes at the local or international level. I suggest the invisible hand is at work from the notoriously invisible people of the world – the women.

The review of the global literature suggests:

First, the importance of deconstructing, decomposing the term globalisation. For example Jagdish Bhagwati breaks the concept down into capital, investment and labour (Bhagwati, 1999). However, in a sense Bhagwati left out the most important segment of globalization, the segment which has generated globalization, namely information technology. Interestingly, the UNDP Human Development Report for 1999 has a diagram which demonstrates that while much is being made of information technology and internet users, the space in the whole circle of the world occupied by the internet wallahs or internet folk is just a tiny segment. It is almost entirely located in the United States and Europe.

The issues that are being debated in the globalization discourse are:

- The role of government – is there a conflict between the concept of globalization and strong governments? What about our national boundaries?
- The role of "national" as opposed to global. What is the role of the national effort? What is the space for national effort?
- Terminology and definition. That is whether the term development now needs to be replaced by the term transformation (Stiglitz, 1998) – transformation defined here as inclusive of political, socio, cultural and economic change (Jain, 1999). Was not the term "progress" a better measure than its replacement, the GDP? (Stiglitz, 1998). Measuring only material changes is insufficient. Whatever terminology or definition are used they must be capable of measuring other variables

This is what I call 'nuancing'. Each thinker, writer, actor is putting a 'comma', so to speak, around these themes of globalization and sustainable development. Each is looking for the detail and re-reading the small print (Jain, 1999) rather than emphasizing the big words. Within this nuancing of the globalization and development landscape, one can also notice some movement towards a similarity of opinion, if not a consensus.

Regulation is a prescription around which there is convergence. Regulation of financial institutions, regulation of labour movement, and the regulation of trade regimes within countries and between countries. Thus from an earlier call to deregulate and liberalize, there is now a shift to regulate. This is often rephrased as governance or management.

Whether it is for people's participation or for efficiency, or that popular word good governance, regulation was required. The proposals ranged from a new international financial institution all the way to the muting of certain global players such as the World Bank and the IMF as not being accountable, and the upscaling of "International" institutions like the WTO, MNCs. (Bhagwati, 1999) Naturally the greatest attention was paid to regulating financial institutions, - local and global - leading to new ideas for International Financial architecture.

Similarly at a meeting of economists called by the UNCTAD (Ref February 1999) the economists drawn from the usual citadels of Academy – MIT, Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge, World Bank, IMF, OECD and so forth - designed a process built on certain premises. Basically they were revisiting old ideas such as regulated trade, sovereignty of the country. The premises were

- That no hard and fast attitude should be taken about protection – that infant industry protection if necessary had to be used.
- That the national economy had to be strengthened almost as a precondition to entry. (implying time bound restrictions to liberalisation)
- That the design of development had to be suited to the countries political, economic and social situations so there would be no universal formula, .
- That the entry had to be gradual,

This advice emerged out of their analysis of the different countries who had already globalised such as Brazil, Mexico, East Asia, Eastern Europe, and had serious crisis which had in their wake also dragged down the rich and prosperous. The spectre of instability, with the added lightning speed of communicating viruses, had brought in circumspection and a preference for a muted journey to that free economic world.

The asymmetrical application of globalisation principles – capital to be freely moved around but labour to be restricted. Subsidies for agriculture in the USA and Europe permitted, but not in LDC's, dumping laws being imposed but not considered as, protectionist, but quota system is considered protectionist etc.

Inequity, asymmetry of labour is also seen as an obstacle to the validation of free trade theory – of comparative advantage maximising of resource, output, profit, and efficiency, justifying a "global" economy.

The equity issue for example for Bhagwati is around labour migration. Capital movements are supported, on the theory of comparative advantage: but the rich countries, to their advantage restrict labour. Bhagwati proposes a World Migration Organisation which enables labour to flow as freely as capitals but also offers a regulatory body to ensure that labour to flow as freely as capitals but also offers a regulatory body to ensure that labour is protected.

Women's Response:

At the Beijing +5 task force meetings that were held in India prior to this meeting, women from the grassroots described the stress they were experiencing due to globalisation in the following terms.

A woman in an urban slum experienced more violence and attributed it to the disengagement of her husband from work in a factory. The factory had closed because the goods it was producing was no more saleable due to the import of similar goods.

Women from another part of the country were suffering mass suicides by their men. These were men who were handloom weavers, who found that their export orders, based on certain prices, and produced against credit advances could not be met as yarn prices had gone up due to export of yarn. They were cornered. They saw no option than to kill themselves. They were cornered. And so the stories go on from sale of children to uncontrolled rage which not only might lead to suicide but also leads to knee-jerk, gun toting violence for the smallest threat.

To illustrate:

Those who are working with the workers in the informal economy, known internationally as WIEGO are working on getting the labour laws, the social security provisions for this labour, especially its women, into a stronger legal provision, while strengthening the organised collective strength of the workers (seminar on Social security 2000 Delhi) They are working both nationally and internationally, with the ILO and lobbying everywhere. They are doing similar work with the Street Vendors.

Those who are struggling against the massive destruction of the natural resources, and the peoples life styles along with it as expressed in the Struggle against the Narmada

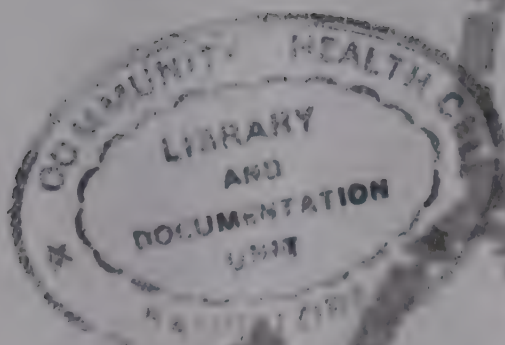
Dam (Jain SOEUL paper 1999) , are also using the law, strengthened by technically competent counter facts, to the States argument, as well as mass based organisations to use the instrument of PUBLIC ACTION and building up public opinion, through knowledge on the side of Justice. The struggle in India is led by a woman, Medha Patkar, who is also working with the National Alliance of People's Movements, to broad base the resistance, and evolve new alternative development programmes.

There is a visible and effective movement called Right to information, also spear headed by a woman, Aruna Roy (not Arundhati Roy, the brilliant novelist, who has given her full support to the NBA), This is also addressing law, REGULATION , and several States are taking up the Right to Information Bills and Acts to open up government and the private agencies including the NGOs to public scrutiny.

At another level, the women in the local government councils., about a million in India to day, elected through a multi party political system every 5 years, (see Jain UNDP women in Governance)to these local government bodies, through an amendment to the constitution which gives them a quota of one third of the seats in the council – are a factor who are building up to be a strong voice for a just government . They are still scattered and often marginalised , but their experience of marginalisation, and patriarchy has begun to turn them around to a potential new social and political force for equitable and innovative political economy (Kerala conference ---International conference on democratic decentralisation Kerala May 23-28th 2000, Jain and Sujaya ---etc refs).

Their quest is for a change in the electoral system, in the procedures for selection of candidates, in the provisions in the constitution. They are also enabling themselves by wishing to learn about budget making as it is being done today, and then the capacity to write other budgets, which would serve their collective interests. In many parts of India they have innovated ways of developing a livelihood protection strategy, as well as a natural resource protection strategy, through these legal political entities of local self government called Panchayati Raj, in India.

These are only a very few of the immense number of initiatives in India in the field of society , law and politics , with which Indian women are trying to deal with the assault of New Economic Policy or Reform as it is called.



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IV: Wider Implications:

Therefore What for the larger feminist movement?

I think there is scope for broadening the cracks in the system by paying attention to the need for regulation, i.e. laws, political and administrative systems, the building of public opinion, and most of all broadening the basis of the international alliances on a feminist platform. This is missing.

I will give some examples of missed opportunity to illustrate what I mean:

At the WTO Conference and Summit in Seattle, India was one of those 'naughty' countries in the eyes of the United States because she is always putting forward resistance to some of their internationalisation or globalisation of trade regimes. India and 11 other DCS countries were insisting that there should be a discussion on implementation of the WTO on the grounds (which in my view is a feminist argument), that the problems that our countries are having in implementation points to changes required in the very principles, i.e. in the rules set up for WTO. The United States was saying that now we cannot redo the rules because these have been agreed upon. Some countries like Japan or Europe are standing in between and saying, "OK, let us take implementation in different bundles and handle it". But the feminist point, that practice teaches theory, and it is only when you put an idea on the ground that you know what is wrong with it, or what is right with it, is the argument of the India-led 11 countries. (India for a more equitable broad-based globalisation, Press Trust of India, The Hindu 30 October 1999; WTO witnesses India, US Showdown, by Devarakonda Ravi Kanth, Deccan Herald, 30 October 1999.)

It is, these countries argue, at the implementation stage that the rules become asymmetrical, as brought out clearly for example in Anti Dumping Laws that the United States is using at every point to prevent imports from developing countries, the intellectual property rights implementation programme and so forth. 11 countries only of the developing world have allied around India. Imagine, if the world wide women's movement, which has also got a programme "working with WTO network" and also the move called "global action against WTO", could provide support to these leverages of India and broaden that space, snowball it rather than showcase it? It could be a turning point in rolling back dominance, but we are not using such leverages.

Future platforms:

The UN Secretary General's in his statement for the Millennium Summit held in Washington in September, has given a call that poverty has to be eradicated and that eradicating poverty is basically a matter of good governance. Perhaps he means a more pro poor set of regulations which will make the entry of the rapacious market driven economic impulses adjust themselves to the needs of the poor and for inequity. However the word governance troubles the progressive movements in the developing countries. It has a genesis in our minds of the World Bank, which talked of good governance as managerial efficiency. And often thrust what can be called theoretical competitive economics which suggest that profit is a signal of efficiency, on to the bodies of the developing countries - ruining many of the countries particularly in Latin

America and Africa. It is important to reflect on the terminology and perhaps move away from the notion of governance and management to transformation to better quality of representation, to a new politics, to ideologies which deal with injustices exclusion, discrimination, New policies, by new leaders who represent, as well as break down old menarche's can move out poverty (see DJ UNDP New York 1997. "This thing called poverty").

The redefining of governance from feminist experience, and changing the focus then from market determined efficiency, to the efficiency of a just and equitable society can be a response.

Another initiative could be to move away from taking a report card approach to the measuring of performance, like PFA monitoring, take a platform of ideas and practices emerging from large scale women's actions in the world and let it teach, speak to the UN and the BWI's towards a revised reconstructed agenda.

This could mean redesigning the participation in the discussions on a new financial architecture. It could mean separating the various groups that protested against WTO both in Seattle and in Washington, and making selective partners for the overall feminist thrust of justice, social justice, social peace and a just development.

We could begin to pay much more attention to the quality of representation.

Many women in India's grass roots politics who have come through the quota, perceive themselves as representing the area and not necessarily women. While this attitude is legitimate, it also invites criticism as whether it is women, dalits or backward caste, reservation is supposed to enhance the representation of that particular group be it women, dalit, backward caste or minorities. If the representative or the person who takes that "ticket", does not necessarily identify themselves with that particular social category, it is perceived to be "unrepresentative". The question of politics based on "identity", its positives and negatives is debated in several layers of political discourse and this experience of local women politicians needs to be taken note of in the discourse. We need new yardsticks to measure performance. (Revathi Narayanan, Mahila Samakhya).

Where women have found that they are able to assert their voice whether it is a voice for an issue or for woman kind, analysis reveals that this is either due to the effective availability and access to support structures such as proximate women's organisations, proximate women's awareness programmes or sustained interaction with training orientation programmes. (Mahila Samakhya, SEARCH, ISST) where they operate in isolation, they are truly alone. Thus the cushioning of the elected person whether it is dalit, woman or minority - by support structures derived from the same social categories, seems to be an enabling necessity.

Further broadening this point, it also seems that for the voices of these groups which have had historical discrimination to have what can be called the transforming impact namely to redress or rearrange the hierarchies in politics, the hierarchies of power, backup is necessary from the broader social and political movements or struggles. Struggles which are fighting for the rights of dalits, or women or displaced persons or

tribals - socio political struggles which attract the attention of the political leadership if they ally themselves with these group who are fighting for a voice of these groups within the local government structures can become more powerful. Therefore the pointer here is to an from alliance between these political personnel and the broader struggles of power of the historically subordinated groups.

In the process, if it could be agreed to find one pole, one unified ideological underpinning which unites, then the strength of building up women's voice and women's advise would be worthwhile.

In the preparations going upto World Conference it would also be useful – and empowering to NGOs – to consolidate, to draw together the ideas and experiences at the national and regional level of the women's movement independently of UN and other world mandates.

It would be useful to identify one or at most issues especially affecting the poor woman – around which the international women's movement rallies.

My idea is that we upturn the aims of a mobilisation to strengthen ourselves, to develop a "women's advice", to all the powers that be, also attempting a united woman's front around an issue or an ideology?

Second, document could be drawn up which would be called something like 'women's advise to global governance'. In other words, what is collectively women's advise to the issues of global governance, international arrangements for regulation of economics, reducing violence against women, etc. It could be women's advice for the millennium drawn from their experience.

It may be apt to quote the UN Human Rights Commissions special Rapporteur on the Right to Development.

The special Rapporteur on the Right to Development, UN HRC Dr. Arjun Sen Gupta (Ref. EPW Vol. XXXIV No. 41 October 9-15 1999).

"Can we build up a cause in our countries that can unite all the downtrodden and disaffected people suffering from specific grievances, economic and political deprivations and inequalities, as well as social and cultural injustices, around a concept of freedom, equity and justice? Let us not have a grand theory to explain all the problems of the economy and society. Nor do we need one general and overriding answer or approach of plan to solve all to solve all these problems. Specific situations need specific approaches. Each problem has to be solved in its own way. But there has to be one cause, which may unite all groups, and one platform on which all those who are deprived, downtrodden and vulnerable can combine to give expression to their anguish and fury. I submit that cause can again be the championing of human rights, the cause of freedom, justice and equity which every individual has the right to claim by virtue of his identity as a human being. And elaborating that cause, we have the new theory that propounds the principle, the right to development is a human right, where development means economic growth with freedom, equity and justice".

Thus in this field of economics and women and development, it is crucial that women develop their own agenda, at the macro level in order to deconstruct the current forces and provide a new social force to redirect economics.

At the recent State of the World Forum held in New York to coincide with the Millenium Summit, I heard a brilliant technologist project the trajectory as seen by the technocrats, the new technology people – and then ask what are the footprints that trajectory would leave? It was not a pretty sight. He appealed to the world's economists to transform that programming with another programme that provides new measures of progress. (Joseph – see dj article on inequality and information technology) Here is a pole for women to build their development agenda and South Africa is well placed to offer this advice.

1. Entering the 21st Century World Development Report 1999/2000
2. The World Bank UNDP Human Development Report 1999, World Employment Report 1998-99,
3. International Labour Office Geneva, Population Food and Production and Nutrition in India UNFPA, October 1999,
4. India Development Report 1999-2000 – Kirit S. Parikh, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, May 1999,
5. The 1999 World Survey on the Role of Women's Development Globalization, Gender and Work
6. Report on the UN Secretary General, "Globalization has a Human Face" Lecture by Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics and Professor of Political Science, Columbia University, October 18, 1999.
7. "Globalization Has a Human Face", lecture by Prof. Jagdish Bhagwati Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics and Professor of Political Science, Columbia University October 18, 1999, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi
8. Towards a new paradigm for development: strategies, policies and processes by Joseph E. Stiglitz, 1998 Prebisch lecture at UNCTAD, Geneva
9. "Home Thoughts from Abroad": by Devaki Jain, University of West Ville, Durban, May 15, 1999.
10. Jain Devaki
 - a. "The Role of People's Movements in Economic and Social Transformation, Opening Thematic Plenary at the 1999 Seoul International Conference of NGO's October 10-16, 1999.
 - b. SADC Meeting, Botswana 19th June 1999.
 - c. Strengthening the South through NAM: The Opportunities Published in the Business
 - d. Role of Women in Decentralisation - C.P. Sujaya and Devaki Jain
 - e. Nuancing globalisation or Mainstreaming the downstream or Reforming Reform – Nita Barrow Memorial Lecture, University of West Indies, Barbados, November 1999

Women's analysis of the differential impact of macro economic policies whether differentiated by class, gender or ethnicity, draws attention to the political element in economic decision-making and not merely to a better deal for women. Responses from what can be called the feminist movement, to macro economic reform are not blunt and flat, but selective. The argument addresses itself to the old question, what kind of change and for whom?

Women's aspiration for economic equality is deeply hinged to the notion of rights. Women need rights from its broadest to its narrowest sense, even more than any other social category.

Women focus their attention on questions such as: Whose interest does the state represent?

As globalisation strides along, and inequality hits hard, almost as hard if not harder than poverty and deprivation, women are mobilizing around rights, and often in the fight against globalisation, we see that the call is also for the right to natural resource. A recent trend in many developing countries has been to rethink on the issue of deregulation, to see that what may be more appropriate is the judicious use of regulation.

I believe that the regional groupings like SADC, SAARC, ASEAN etc. are a method, -a natural self protective mechanism to contain and hold oneself against globalisation, through inducing a shift in the premises of regional economic cooperation, from market access, trade, export led approach to a continental development intra-regional approach. The need is to build regional analysis and come up with a collective voice.

In many countries with a large population like India, removal of poverty acts as a spur to demand, and therefore a stimulus to growth. I suggest that poverty eradication is the best engine of growth and that by dealing with the last first, economic regeneration will bubble up_ as economic prosperity has never trickled down. When we are talking of poverty, we tend to talk about redistribution. Let's grow and then we will give you something. We will do public works to mop up the poor. I would argue that you could actually generate growth if you make poverty removal the first step. How do you do that? When you remove poverty by , say, providing livelihoods, opportunities for people to earn incomes, automatically you have what is called "purchasing power", .i.e. you put purchasing power in the hands of the poor. As many economists will tell you, it is demand that generates production and production in turn generates growth. It is a cycle, which is pushed by demand. As long a large percentage of the population remains poor, and without jobs, an income to spend, you will always have that vicious circle of poverty instead of breaking it out into a spiral of growth. I want to counter the old "Trickling Down Theory of Growth" with this "Bubbling Up Theory"

In this context I would like to add some observations about what I have called the "economic vote". Every time you buy something, you can in fact put some money in the stomach of a poor woman or man, if your consumption is that which enables the poor. This again was one of the basic ideas that Gandhiji generated in India. He argued that if you want to remove poverty then buy that thing which the poor produce, like cheap clothes, handmade things etc. If most of us would have an ethic that we would buy only that which is produced and provides a livelihood to somebody (and not through a corporate sector) then you have exercised your economic vote on behalf of the poor. While this may look far-fetched, I want to tell you that today in India, many people are earning their livelihood by handloom. We need to look at social security for the poor as basically economic security. If you look at the poorest women, what she would like, as social security is money, to buy food, to get water etc. If you are looking at the poor, as the lens with which you are looking at the world, then social security is second in order to economic security.

I would like to conclude with a quote from Amartya Sen(Development as Freedom, Alfred Knopf,2000.)

"There is plenty of evidence that wherever social arrangements depart from the standard practice of male ownership, women can seize business and economic initiative with mass success. It is also clear that the result of women's participation is not merely to generate income for women, but also to provide the social benefits that come from women's enhanced status and independence...The economic participation of women is, thus, both a reward on its own... and a major influence for social change in general."

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MISSION STATEMENT

*The GENDER ADVOCACY PROGRAMME (GAP)
is non profit, independent gender advocacy and lobbying organisation
based in the Western Cape where we originated as a grassroots initiative.*

*We see our position as bridging the gap between women
in civil society and structures of governance.*

*In particular we focus on urban and rural women living in impoverished conditions.
We conduct research, facilitate training and engage in gender advocacy and lobbying
to mobilise, link and empower women to lobby for equity
between women and men in all spheres of South African society.*



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